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June 30, 2009

Governor O'Malley "EmPOWERs Clean Energy Communities" With \$7.3 Million for Energy Improvements throughout Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, MD: Governor Martin O'Malley announced today the award recipients for the "EmPOWER Clean Energy Communities" programs, which help local governments and nonprofits fund energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The grants and zero-interest loans, overseen by the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), are providing \$7.3 million this fiscal year to local governments and nonprofits across our *One Maryland*.

"These grants are an example of exactly the type of efficiency projects we had intended for Maryland businesses and families when we entered into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the nation's first multi-state collaborative carbon cap-and-trade program," said Governor O'Malley. "These grants are another step forward in our goal to make Maryland's future cleaner, greener, and more sustainable for all our citizens."

The \$4.7 million in grants and \$2.6 million in loans awarded will assist eligible organizations with improvements that will jumpstart energy savings and decrease their monthly electricity bills. A portion of the funding under both programs is dedicated specifically for projects that help low and moderate income households. The MEA provided a total of 64 grants and loans to Maryland Counties, municipalities and non-profits. Chosen through a competitive bidding process, in which 114 applications were submitted with funding requests in excess of \$30 million, the awards fell into three categories: grants for energy efficiency totaling \$4.5 million, of which \$3.5 million is dedicated to low/moderate income households, zero-interest energy efficiency loans, totaling \$2.6 million, of which \$1.5 million is for low/moderate income households, and renewable energy grants totaling \$193,000. Together, these projects will result in overall energy savings estimated at 12.2 million kilowatt hours annually, which is the equivalent of over \$1.6 million in energy savings each year.

The Jane E. Lawton Conservation Loan Program provides financing to local governments, nonprofits and businesses for projects that can be paid back out of the energy savings over time. Additionally, the Community Clean Energy Grant program will provide funds to local governments, community groups and non-profit organizations to facilitate projects that increase the energy efficiency and/or the use of renewable energy to benefit the local government or community and promote affordable, reliable, and clean energy.

As part of the EmPOWERing Clean Communities Initiative, the local governments and non-profits have pledged to provide energy checkups to an estimated 26,000 low and moderate income households; retrofit an additional 900 homes (over 500 of which will be low/moderate income), which is estimated to reduce electric bills roughly 20 percent; overhaul 74 community buildings, ranging from public schools, ice rinks, museums and government buildings; and finance solar, wind or other renewable projects and feasibility studies at communities throughout Maryland.

"The Maryland Energy Administration is thrilled with the level of interest from local, community groups throughout our State and is excited to partner with these groups to make continued strides in realizing our shared energy efficiency goals," commented MEA Director Malcolm Woolf, "This marks yet another big step forward in meeting our State's *EmPOWER Maryland* goal of 15% reduced energy consumption by 2015."

Funding for the programs comes from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund, which was created from public auctions of carbon credits through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Additional funds to support new projects will be available for local governments and nonprofits in the coming fiscal year. Guidelines for the grant program are on the MEA website: www.energy.maryland.gov